

SUPPLEMENT.

The Standard

OGDEN, APRIL 8, 1888.

EPISLIE.

To the Officers and Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in General Conference assembled.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS:

At each of the past six General Conferences of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there has been an Epistle from the President of the Church to the officers, the assembled officers and Saints and penitential for the benefit of those who were prevented from being present at the Conference. The reasons for this are well known to the Church and the reason is, that a number of the Apostles have been unable to personally attend these Conferences or other open gatherings. Their voices have not been heard instructing, encouraging, strengthening and warning the Saints, or the dispensations of the Spirit which should devolve upon them in connection with their ministry. It was proper, therefore, that Epistles should be written to the Church in which counsel could be given and testimony be given in the name of all, so far as the Apostles are concerned, still remains unchanged, the instructions upon general subjects in the previous epistles are repeated, and again, directly to the entire Church and the bondsmen of the Saints, that we deem it not necessary to repeat them at the present time or to write a lengthy Epistle.

OPPOSITION CONFRONTING THE SAINTS.

The people of whom we have any knowledge have been called upon to pass through such scenes and to have such a peculiar experience as the Latter-day Saints. The trials and difficulties we have had to contend with, so far as we have so far in church history, have scarcely been equaled in our generation. But those we have had to meet during the past three or four years, and which still confront us, are new even in our experience and have a character and form all their own. Originating in the same source, prompted by the same spirit, and designed for the same end, as other plans which have been put into operation for our injury and overthrow, the present attack which is made upon us, differs from all others in that it is conducted by methods from anything we have ever had to encounter. We have seen led to expect from the beginning that as the work of God grew and developed in the world, the tendency to it would become more formidable and wide spread, would increase in intensity and vigor, and bring into antagonism to it more influential powers. This

has ever been the voice of prophecy and testimony and we consider the future of the work of God which we have espoused. If we, then, have not been prepared for these trials which we now have to overcome, it has not been because we have not been warned of them and by the testimony of His Spirit and by the voice of His faithful servant, God has given His people ample time for preparation and the Latter-day Saints who have lived to enjoy the spirit of the *“A&W”*—things of expectation and have prepared themselves to meet such trials as have come upon us, and others which may yet be in reserve for us before the final victory is achieved over Satan and the embattled powers of darkness.

THE PRIVILEGE OF REVELATION.

It is a pre-knowledge which God has given concerning His work, and which He constantly imparts as it is needed to His people, which is one of the chief causes of the strength possessed by the Latter-day Saints. The principles of revelation from the Head of the Church to the Church itself—a privilege which in its operation is not confined to one man, or to three men, or to twelve men; but is extended to every individual who is called in exalted or low degree, as each one comes to a wise mind of it. There is as I apprehended was, however, by which revelation from the Lord for the government of the Church received. There is but one man on the earth, at a time, who holds this power. But every individual member has the privilege of receiving revelation from the Lord for his guidance in his own affairs, or to bring to him concerning the correctness of public teachings and movements.

The great promise which accompanies the preaching of the Gospel, as revealed from heaven in our day, is that “unto all that will be given of the Spirit of God will be given the knowledge of the church, who obey His holy ordinances.” Through the Holy Ghost a knowledge of things past, present and to come is communicated and the mind and will of the Almighty is known to those who obey Him. The Almighty reveals His purposes to those who obey His commandments and whose lives are pure and acceptable before Him, so that they can be prepared for all the events and trials that may be in their path now. It is of the greatest importance to the members of the Church who do not know by their own experience that this is true, that they may be assured that they do not live up to their privileges. All Saints should be in the world, the church, the Holy Ghost, and, through it, with the Father, or there is danger of their being overcome of evil and falling by the wayside.

We, therefore, call to the Latter-day Saints of the High Council, and all in an ushered tabernacle. If you would enjoy the full powers and gifts of your religion, you must be pure. If you are guilty of weakness, follies and sins, you must repent of them; that is, you must thoroughly forsake them and then you will please God. “Moral holiness” is His name, and He delights in the efforts of His children to be pure. *

ABSENCE OF OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

We feel led to speak in this strain, for the reason that while the Latter-day Saints are not proper to prosper in their present condition, the known absence of God in our church is close to Him, the present is an extraordinary time which appears to require more help and strength from the Lord than usual. The Church has been left, as we said, for so long a time, without the public ministrations of a number of the men to whom its members have looked for instruction and counsel. Not only has the number of the Apostles who could minister in public been greatly reduced, but the same cause which has relegated them to seclusion have had the effect to keep many Presidents of stakes and their counselors, Bishops and their assistants, as well as High Councilors and other church officers, absent from fulfilling in their callings. The people have felt the absence of these men and the loss of their teachings and guidance. But has the Lord on this account forgotten His people? No, on the contrary. The power of the faithful men of God, who have been preserved from ministering to the people, and whose hearts have been full of love and earnest desire for their welfare, have not ceased to minister to the people. He would make up to them, by his more abundant outpouring of His Holy Spirit, for the deprivation to which they have been subjected in not having the presence of many of His servants among them.

THE HAND AND PURPOSES OF GOD.
The Barker said, “It is impossible but that offences will come; but,” he added, “when unto them through whom they come.” In this case offences have come, and it has appeared that we have not been prepared for them. We do not acknowledge the hand of God in that which has taken place in our land and which affects us so deeply? We who have seen in all our affairs, and in all the events which have happened to us, His power and His wise and manifested plan, feel that the occurrences of the past three or four years have been permitted by Him for a wise purpose. We

any suppose that these happenings have been by chance and without a design. God has so dealt with us in the past. Mysterious as have been many times when we had them to encounter, time has never failed to throw light upon and explain them. When that happened we, perhaps acknowledging the hand of the Lord in them, because of the Lord having said we should see his goodness upon us the principle of faith. Afterwards, however, we would look back and realize that God had wrought in the fullness of our hearts and in view of the results, have acknowledged, not in faith but in developed knowledge, that God's hand was in all that had occurred. So with the experience, painful though it be, which we are now gaining.

God has a purpose to accomplish in permitting the treatment which we have received. Whatever the result to others who have prompted and been active in publishing it, to us it cannot be anything but a blessing. We have been told, "We receive it in the right spirit and hear it patiently." One good effect is apparent. The Latter-day Saints are compelled, perhaps to a greater extent than ever before, to think and act for themselves and not to depend so much upon others for their lead. Some, however, live so as to have the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost, may stumble and fall. But those who have lived up to their privileges will find that God has not left His people to themselves, nor without a testimony as to the course they should pursue.

THE SAINTS MUST BE TESTED.

The pathway of the people of God has been beset with difficulties. They have been exposed to many dangers. Dark clouds have almost encircled them. But amongst all these, the still, small voice of the Spirit of God has been heard. His Saints have had a testimony from the Lord that the course they have been led in is the right one. He will never fail to make known His mind and will to them so long as they live up to His requirements.

It appears plain that it is God's purpose to suffer His Saints to be thoroughly tried and tested, so that they may prove their integrity and know the character of the foundation upon which they build. Many things have occurred during the last twelve months which are well adapted to test the faith and integrity of the people. It does not seem possible that they could have been in the light of the Holy Ghost's witness in their souls can escape doubts and fears concerning the work of God. So many things have occurred which are entirely different to pre-conceived notions as to the course that would be taken to establish Zion that the people would have a knowledge for himself to clearly understand that God is leading us in the path which we are now pursuing. To some who are inclined to despair and to take a gloomy view of affairs, and to the Zions, may, perhaps, appear to drift away from the Lord's path because things are being done or movements commenced to which, to their eyes, portend disaster to us and to the work of God.

ENEMY'S CRITICISM.

There has always been a few among us who have been filled with evil forebodings, and who have failed to see the wisdom of God in the steps which His people have been led to take. They have questioned and counseled the course which we have given, and have accepted that revision had ceased and the Saints were no longer guided by men to whom God made known His will. The prophet Joseph Smith has been the object of much criticism and censure of this class. He was often accused of being a false prophet and of leading the Church astray. During the long presidency of President Brigham Young, the same charges were made, and many apostolates were made to the effect that he stated, "He was no longer led by the Lord." Experience has proved that in all such cases those who make these accusations are themselves in the dark.

But the faithful people—those who have lived scrupulously in accordance with their profession as Saints and with the requirements of the Gospel—have not been assailed by doubts of this character. There might be many things which they could not clearly understand, and which they might not be fully prepared to act on at the time; but possessing the Spirit of God, and being led by it, they trusted in the Lord and felt satisfied to leave the management of His kingdom and affairs to His supreme wisdom. This development of the correctness of the course which the Church had led been to adopt. This has occurred so frequently in our career that the instances will readily suggest themselves to those familiar with our history. In this way, however, the faith of the people has been constantly tested.

THE ANNOTING THE SAINTS HAVE BEEN ADOPTED.

The Apostle John, in speaking to the Saints in his day, said: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and shall not lie in it." He hath taught you, ye should abide in him.

The Saints in our day have received this same anointing and they should be in a position to not be dependent upon man to teach and tell them that which they know. They have had the word of instruction given to them in ways that are past. This instruction has covered the entire policy of building up the kingdom of God on the earth. Of this contained instruction they have been a part and entitled to it. It was granted to them in the design of Providence that they should be left to show to the heavens, to each other and to the world whether the truths they have been taught have had the proper effect upon them, or not—whether when left to certain extent to themselves they would be led to do that which would bring them into difficulties and acts by principle—principle to the truth of which testimony has been borne by the Holy Ghost—or by the spirit and customs of Babylon by which they are surrounded, but from which they are supposed to be gathered out.

NECESSITY OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

The present is an appropriate time for each member of the Church to in-

duce in self-examination—to measure his conduct and life in the full light of the heavenly principles revealed to us. Ours is no ordinary calling. Great opportunities and privileges have been given upon us. To us, as a people, has been entrusted the grand and glorious labor of laying the foundation of the kingdom of God upon the earth. Every act of our lives should be performed with this in view. Nothing should be done in our calling but that which is in accordance with the will of the Lord. Saint Paul will well conflict with the policy which God has announced as proper to be adopted in establishing that kingdom. In the connection there are questions which each one must ask himself. Do I, in my words and acts, set all the transgressions of my life constantly before me in the advancement and prosperity of the Zion of God as the direct and most important consideration? Do I, through covetousness of a dollar or two, or a few dollars, leave, depart from the line of conduct which God, through His Spirit and the teachings of His servants, has said His Saints should follow? Do I, by my words and acts, set such an example before my family that my children will grow up in the love of God and fully imbued with a love of Zion and with an understanding of the principles upon which Zion will be built up.

Many more questions of a similar character each one can ask himself in this process, and each one of these can be answered correctly. There need be no fears induced in concerning the effect of the Edmunds-Tucker law, the confederation with the state movement, the "boom" as it is called, or any other measure which may be adopted either in the view of or for the Zion of God. Respecting all these movements, about which there is more or less agitation and concern and perhaps excitement, there need be no fears if the Latter-day Saints will only bear in mind the covenants they have made with the God of heaven, and especially the principles which He has told us must govern us in the building up of His Zion.

CONSEQUENCES OF FORGETTING COVENANTS.

If, however, we forget our covenants, and depart from and disregard the teachings which He has given us, then he who has agreed, Latter-day Saints, our position is to offer to us "God's promises will be fulfilled; but we shall be deceived, and those who persist in this course will be rejected and be deprived of all share in the blessings promised to Zion. Where those professing to be Latter-day Saints go astray, and brazenly act in contravention of the counsels which He has given us, then we have cause to fear and the plots of the wicked against us, joined by the foolish disbeliefs and rebellion of professed Saints, become a serious menace to our peace, prosperity and progress of Zion."

Praying the Lord to endow every officer of the Church who desires to magnify his calling, with every gift and qualification which belongs to the priesthood which he bears, and to till the members of the Church with the love of God and his gifts.

I remain your Brother and Servant in Christ Jesus,

WILLARD WOODBRIDGE,
a behalf of the Quorum of the Twelve,
April 6th, 1888.